CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1569
4 February 1999

Original: ENGLISH

CANADA

Proposal concerning CD action on outer space

Canada renews its proposal that

- The CD establish an ad hoc committee on outer space with the mandate to negotiate a convention for the non-weaponization of outer space.

BACKGROUND

- A number of limited international agreements deal with outer space, most notably "The Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies".

- Under Article IV of that Treaty, States Parties to the Treaty "undertake not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any kinds of weapons of mass destruction ... or station such weapons in outer space in any other manner."

- There is no multilateral agreement banning the deployment of weapons other than weapons of mass destruction in outer space.

- There are a growing number of States with the capacity or near-capacity to place objects into orbit; this will only increase in the future.

- There is currently no arms race in outer space. Canada accepts the current military uses of outer space for surveillance, intelligence-gathering and communications. Our focus is on the non-weaponization of outer space, i.e. no positioning of actual weapons in outer space.

- By 'weapon' we mean e.g. "any device or component of a system designed to inflict physical harm through deposition of mass and/or energy on any other object".

- On verification of such a Treaty many useful ideas already exist, including work done in earlier CD Ad Hoc Committees on Outer Space. We welcome an early realistic reappraisal of those basic concepts.

- As an interim step towards full negotiations, Canada would accept the appointment of a CD Special Coordinator with an appropriate mandate to explore prospects for the early establishment of an ad hoc committee with a negotiating mandate. The above proposal as well as other relevant suggestions could then be fully considered for future action.

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CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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GROUP OF 21

Proposal on the programme of work

1. The Conference takes the following decisions:

   i. The Conference establishes an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament[1] under agenda item 1 "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament".

   ii. The Conference establishes, under agenda item 1 entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", an ad hoc committee which shall negotiate, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein, a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

   iii. The Conference establishes an ad hoc committee under agenda item 3 "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" to negotiate specific and concrete measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

   iv. The Conference establishes an ad hoc committee for agenda item 4 "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons" to negotiate with a view to reaching agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. These arrangements could take the form of an internationally legally-binding instrument. The ad hoc committee shall take into consideration all relevant views and proposals present and future and also address questions related to its mandate (CD/1501).

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[1] The Group of 21 continues to attach the highest priority to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament under agenda item 1.

The President of the Conference on Disarmament stated at the 811th Plenary Meeting on 28 January 1999 that he shall try to identify a Special Coordinator in accordance with paragraph 5(d) of document CD/1036 to assist in carrying out consultations with a view to reaching consensus, on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament or its mandate.

A specific proposal on a mandate for the ad hoc committee is being considered by the Group of 21 for presentation.

The ad hoc committees shall present reports to the Conference on Disarmament on the progress of their work before the conclusion of the 1999 session.

2. The Conference appoints a Special Coordinator under agenda item 6 entitled "Comprehensive programme of disarmament" to seek the views of its Members on the most appropriate way to deal with the questions related to anti-personnel landmines taking into account, *inter alia*, developments outside the Conference.

3. The Conference appoints a Special Coordinator under agenda item 7 entitled "Transparency in armaments" to seek the views of its Members on the most appropriate way to deal with the questions related to this item.

4. In implementing these decisions the Special Coordinators shall take into consideration all relevant views and proposals, present and future.

5. The Conference requests the Special Coordinators to present early and regular reports on the outcome of their consultations throughout the session, including before the end of the second part of its 1999 session.

6. The Conference also decides to appoint Special Coordinators on the review of its agenda, the expansion of its membership and its improved and effective functioning. These Special Coordinators, in discharging their duties and functions, will take into account all proposals and views, as well as future initiatives. The Conference requests these Special Coordinators to report to it before the conclusion of the 1999 session.

7. The taking of these decisions contained in paragraphs 2 and 3 does not prejudge the positions of delegations on the eventual establishment of subsidiary bodies on the issues identified, but reflects agreement to advance the conference's work with a view to reaching consensus. This decision is also taken without prejudice to the rights of members of the Conference to move forward with positions and proposals already made or to be put forward in the future.